



DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Office of Health Care Quality

Spring Grove Center • Bland Bryant Building

55 Wade Avenue • Catonsville, Maryland 21228-4663

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – John M. Colmers, Secretary

TRANSMITTAL

TO: Nursing Home Administrators

FROM: Nancy Grimm, Director, NBG
Office of Health Care Quality

RE: Holiday Decorations in Health Care Facilities

DATE: October 20, 2010

The Office of Health Care Quality has observed health care facilities who continue to display flammable/combustible decorations.

This transmittal serves as a reminder that all facilities must comply with the **2000 edition of the Life Safety Code, section 19.7.5.4 and section 19.7.5.6 of the 2006 edition of the Life safety Code, which states:**

Combustible decorations shall be prohibited in any health care occupancy unless they are flame retardant, with the exception of combustible decorations such as photographs and paintings that are in such limited quantities that there is no hazard of fire development or fire spread. **The decorations must be labeled as flame retardant or their original container must state the decorations are flame retardant. Decorative lighting such as string type Christmas lights shall be approved by Underwriters Laboratory (U/L). Electric lights shall not be used on a metal artificial tree. Flame producing devices, including, but not limited to, candles, may not be used on or near any type of tree.** The facility must be able to provide the flame retardant statement on the decoration or the original container for the decoration to OHCQ Health Facility surveyors or Life Safety Code/Fire Safety Inspectors.

The fact that the health care occupancy is protected by a full automatic sprinkler system does not change or void this code requirement.

Chapter-6, FRESH CUT AND LIVE TREE FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS, Public safety Article 6-206, Regulation-.03, Display-.04, Paragraph-B, states:

Live or fresh cut trees may not be displayed in nursing homes, hospitals or limited care facilities. Residential Board and Care Occupancies, (Assisted Living Facilities) may display live or fresh cut trees only if they are protected by an approved full automatic sprinkler system. Artificial

trees are permitted if it is labeled or otherwise identified or certified as flame retardant or flame resistant by a testing laboratory recognized by the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

Holiday decorations, corkboards with memos, and/or decorations attached to the corridor wall shall not exceed 20% of the wall surface.

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact Michael Bond, Office of the State Fire Marshal, at 410-653-8986 or at mbond@mdsp.org.
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